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Parents, Families and
Friends of Lesbians
and Gays promotes
the health and well-
being of gay, lesbian,
bisexual, and trans-
gendered persons,
their families, and
their friends through

SUPPORT to cope
with an adverse
society

EDUCATION to
enlighten an ill-
informed public

ADVOCACY to end
discrimination and
secure equal civil
rights.

Oregon Central Coast Chapter

January 2010

Action Pays!

One person can make a difference. Below is a way that you can make a difference in your world.

The “Yes I Do!” campaign lists the members of Congress who have said they support **marriage equality**. Ask your representatives for a statement supporting gender-neutral marriage.

<http://www.equalitygiving.org/Same-Sex-Marriage-Quiz>

Other websites of interest to PFLAG members:

www.OutHistory.org: documentation of **GLBTQ past** in the United States.

www.EndtheLies.org: help for political activists to **combat anti-gay lies** and distortions.

www.asaging.org/larc: a free online clearinghouse of resources for **LGBT elders** from the American Society on Aging including annotated listings for more than 450 organizations, businesses, articles, and websites plus links for ordering DVDs, books, etc.; also videos of LGBT elders and experts on aging who discuss key issues.

www.LGBTUSA.net; www.LGBTUniverse.net: **LGBT news and resources**, including topics such as jobs, coming out, parenting, nightlife, weddings, travel, etc., organized by state (USA) or country (Universe).

www.imfromdriftwood.com: **Stories from young people** about coming out and being LGBTQ.

January 27, 6:00 pm:

Potluck/Bible study on “Hope, Homosexuality, and Hospitality”—Atonement Lutheran Church, 2315 N. Coast Highway, Newport

Kae Bates & Jeanne St.John

CAN Volunteers of the Year 2009

Two years ago on my 65th birthday, when we filled out the forms for Oregon's new Domestic Partnership Registration, we were asked to do an interview with the local paper. Almost in unison we said, "Yes, it's time." The next day we spoke openly about our relationship for the first time in the 26 years we'd been together. While we never lied about our partnership, we had perfected the art of discretion, invisibility, and other euphemisms for the closet.

To avoid discomfort for friends or distractions from our work, we kept our relationship private and did not mention milestones like 10th or even 25th anniversary celebrations. That meant when Friday's paper came out, so did we!

We were relieved and deeply touched by the response to the article. Friends, former colleagues, and strangers called, emailed, and sent anniversary, Valentine's, and thank you cards. The parents of a gay teen sent a note thanking us for making his world safer; a friend wrote a beautiful blessing. A stranger called to say she was encouraged to see our story, that she and her partner have been together over 30 years, and are very active with Eugene's PFLAG (Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays) chapter. There was a note of congratulations and love from the school staff where I'd retired as principal.

At the pool I was hailed as a "shero"; a shop owner said she was surprised by the article—that she didn't know Kae was a nurse. St. Luke's members expressed pride that their church embraces all God's chil-

dren, and doesn't restrict their participation to the pew. Strangers stopped us to say they were glad to see the article, that it's time for legal rights for everyone

Coming out has been a real conversation starter. We've heard touching stories about gay friends or relatives who died, still invisible to their families and friends. Stories about elderly couples who were forcibly separated by their families and moved across country to different nursing homes after spending 40-50 years together. Older gays who lost the homes and businesses they had built together when one died—and there was no legal standing to protect the grieving survivor.

Coming out at sixty-five brought us into a whole new community and strengthened our commitment to saving the lives of gay teens. Now we're serving on the county-wide LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender) Task Force, which led to chairing a new PFLAG chapter for the Central Oregon Coast, which led to an award from Basic Rights Oregon. We participated in the Iris Pride Festival, the first on the Oregon Coast, and we've helped establish Gay/Straight Alliance clubs in area high schools. We've led church discussions about LGBT issues and we've staffed rainbow-decorated PFLAG tables at Farmer's Markets and community fairs.

Coming out at 65 does beat some of the alternatives. One young PFLAG member recalled coming out at 14 on Christmas Day. She greeted her family with, "Merry Christmas, I'm gay". Now she wishes she'd waited till the presents were opened.

—Jeanne St.John



Politics on Our Side

When Maine gays and lesbians lost the right to marry because of a general vote in the state, some people were discouraged. But there is another side of the coin.

Some of the GLBT candidates who won their political races were highlighted in the last issue of this newsletter as is the new mayor of Houston in this issue. In addition, Georgia voters elected Simone Bell to the Georgia State House, making her the first openly lesbian African-American state legislator in U.S. history. Atlanta voters also elected Alex Wan, making him the city's first openly gay man and first Asian-American member of the city council.

After reading James McKinley Jr.'s article in *The New York Times* ("Gay Candidates Getting Support That Gay Causes Don't," 12/28/09), I realized that the number of GLBT candidates achieving victory across the country is growing exponentially despite the bans on gender-neutral marriage in the United States.

Texas, for example. In 2005 it became the 19th state to pass a constitutional amendment barring same-sex marriage with a ratio of three to one. In the past decade, however, Lupe Valdez, an out lesbian, has won election as the sheriff of Dallas County twice. Rosemay Lehmborg, another out lesbian, has been elected district attorney in Travis County. Gay candidates have also won city council seats in Austin, Fort Worth, and Houston. And Annise Parker has become mayor of Houston. And this is just one state and one considered to be conservative.

At least 445 openly gays and lesbians hold elected office in the United States, almost doubling the 257 eight years ago.

This rise in openly gay candidates' achieving public office may be a better indicator of societal attitudes than the fights over gender-neutral marriage are, according to some political scientists.

"[Gay marriage ballot measures] don't give us a real good picture of the opinion trend over the past 30 years," says Patrick Egan, a political scientist at New York University who studies issues involving gay and lesbian politicians.



A reason for the shift may be the increased openness of GLBT individuals. "More and more people have been coming out," says Sean Theriault, a political scientist at the University of Texas. "Ten years ago, you could talk to a lot of people who didn't know a single gay person and now, especially in the cities, you would be hard pressed to find someone who doesn't know anyone who is gay."

One key to victory has been for the person to build a reputation as a well-qualified candidate. Voters uncomfortable with homosexuality in the abstract are often willing to vote for a gay or lesbian they feel they know. For example, when Valdez' opponent tried to use her sexual identity against her, she pointed out, in a close contest, that she had always been honest about this and asked what it had to do with law enforcement. With the main issue of handling the jails, Valdez easily defeated her challenger.

PFLAG Members Invited

January 27: Bishop Dave Brauer-Rieke of the Oregon Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America will present a Bible study to provide a better understanding of specific Biblical references to homosexuality and ways to interpret God's word relative to the church's ministry of hospitality.

A potluck supper at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall will be followed by the Bible study at 7:00. Atone-ment Lutheran Church is at 2315 N. Coast Highway, Newport. For more information, please call Carol Baker at 541-265-2525.

Census Counts Same-Sex Marriages

A new census policy requires that married same-sex couples will be counted as married, not as "unmarried partners," as the computer was programmed to do in 2000.

Changing Gender ID Easier in Washington

The state of Washington has simplified the process for residents to change the gender on their driver's licenses by requiring applicants to turn in a letter from a psychologist or physician stipulating that they have "initiated appropriate clinical treatment."

Beck Names Bates and St.John CAN Volunteer of the Year

Dan Beck made the following introduction when announcing the World AIDS Day 2009 Coastal AIDS Network's Volunteers of the Year—2009, Kae Bates and Jeanne St.John.

"Last year we honored Dr. Tom DeBlois for his outstanding contributions to our community. The reason behind that was his work in establishing a framework for CAN's outreach and prevention program for teens. He set up a teen identity group that met in his office and dealt with teens who were struggling with their identity.

It was during a hiatus of the group that one of its participants committed suicide. This child's death brought together a group of health, education and mental health professionals from around the county to look for ways to increase our outreach to teens to prevent further suicides or suicidal behaviors.

We met monthly in Dr. Tom's office until he moved to California. During these meetings it was decided that our outreach needed a component that would provide support for the families of the teens we were working with. The logical choice was to re-establish a coastal chapter of PFLAG. Our volunteers of the year have together made that goal a reality.

Kae and Jeanne work together to make sure that PFLAG meetings happen and are organized. They do this on top of their other commitments in the community with their church and Lincoln County's Health Advisory Board. As they each underwent surgery this year, the other provided care and continued to make sure that PFLAG's work got done. They have also continued to facilitate Dr. Tom's monthly meetings of what we affectionately call the Gay and Lesbian Task Force even though not all the participants are gay or lesbian. For all these reasons, we are honoring our volunteers of the year, Kae Bates and Jeanne StJohn for their tireless work to make our coastal community a better and safer place for all of us.

Fortunate Families, a national organization that gives support and information to Catholic families with LGBT children, has established the "Listening Parents Network" of Catholic parents with an LGBT daughter or son who have offered to listen to and share their experiences with others. Their names and contact information are available at www.FortunateFamilies.org (Fortunate Families NetworkàListening Parents).

People Who Make a Difference

Cynthia Stewart, a junior at Tharptown High School (Russellville, AL), wanted to bring her girlfriend to the prom on March 25 after she, as a member of the planning committee, had personally raised \$200 for the dance and created the theme for the dance. The school said no and cancelled the prom. Stewart's aunt and guardian, Kathy Baker, approached the ACLU who demanded that she be allowed to attend. Franklin County School System officials decided that they would change their minds. Stewart's girlfriend will be allowed at the prom.

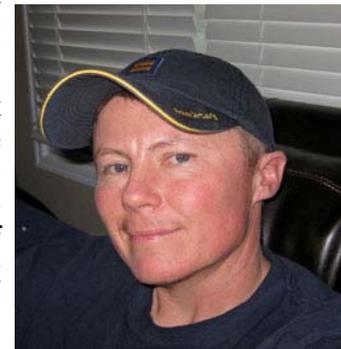


Annise Parker has been elected Houston's first openly gay mayor in a contentious, hard-fought campaign. "It's a historic election for my community. . . . It's a diverse, international city that welcomes everyone," says Parker, who began her political career as a gay activist, rising through the ranks of local politics to serve first on city council, then as city controller. With a little more than 152,000 ballots in the city of 2.2 million, she defeated former city attorney with 53.6 percent of the vote on December 12.

The Rev. Mary Glasspool, a lesbian priest, has been elected assistant bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles. Glasspool needs the consent of a majority of Episcopal dioceses before she can take the job of bishop suffragan. She is the second openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church and the world Anglican fellowship. The first is New Hampshire Bishop V. Gene Robinson. Hearing she had narrowly won on the seventh ballot, she says, "I've just been trying to be faithful to God and to God's call throughout my entire life." Her victory underscores a continued church commitment to accept same-sex relationships despite enormous pressure from other Anglicans to change their stand. Ordained in 1981, Glasspool, 55, has been with her partner, Becky Sander, since 1988.



Kerry Bell, a 14-year veteran of the Bountiful (UT) police force, has kept his job after transitioning from female to male. Bell belongs to the LGBT Public Safety Committee, a group with police representatives from Weber County to West Valley City that has worked for nine years to bridge the gap. Committee members help gay and transgender people understand police procedures and coach police on how to respond to cases of same-sex domestic violence and gay cruising in parks. His "only anxiety," he says, was telling his parents, who divorced when Bell was two years old. His mother, his father and their spouses have been supportive. "It's a little difficult for me, after forty years, to think of my daughter as a son. That's hard. [But] it hasn't changed a thing about how I feel about him as a person," says his dad, Terry Bell, who lives in Rockville near Zion National Park.



D.C., Mexico City Legalize Gender-Neutral Marriage

Joining five states in the U.S., the District of Columbia Council voted 11-2 to legalize same-sex marriage.

“Gays and lesbians bear every burden of citizenship and are entitled to every benefit and protection that the law allows,” says openly gay Council member David Catania.

Archbishop Donald Wuerl warned that this act would force the church to scale

back its social services because all employers doing business with the city must provide health benefits for married same-sex couples.

If Congress takes no action to block the law within 30 legislative days from December 17, the day that the mayor signed the law, it will become legal.

Mexico City is the first Latin American city to legalize same-sex marriage.

Hate Backfires, Increases Coffers In Synagogue

A Manhattan synagogue raised \$10,000 in just 50 minutes last summer because of a hate group's actions. When members of Fred Phelps' rabidly anti-gay and anti-Semitic Kansas-based church came to Beth Simchat Torah, the West Village congregation catering to lesbians and gays asked for pledges of a dollar or more for every minute Phelps' demonstrators "visited."

United States Publically Opposes Ugandan Death Penalty for Gays

On the eve of World AIDS Day, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Monday made the strongest statement yet by an administration official that the United States will not tolerate efforts to criminalize homosexuality among countries that receive U.S. funding to combat HIV/AIDS. Her statement was in response to the proposed Ugandan law that would make homosexuality punishable by death. The prime ministers of Canada and the U.K. have spoken out against the proposed law.

For several years, U.S. conservatives have supported Ugandan efforts to criminalize homosexuality although some of them had disavowed any support for the death penalty. Among these are evangelical pastor Rick Warren, Sen. John Ensign, (R-NV), Sen. Tom Coburn (R-OK), Gov. Mark Sanford (SC, R), Rep. Bart Stupak (D-MI), and Rep. Joe Pitts (R-PA). A U.S. promoter of the Ugandan law is Scott Lively, once active with the Oregon Citizens Alliance which fought against equality of LGBT individuals.

U.S. Lifts Ban against HIV-Positive Visitors; Will Host National AIDS Conference

The ban against HIV-positive visitors, in effect for 22 years, will be lifted on January 4. In the past, U.S. Immigration has granted special waivers to some people with the illness, but the process is complicated and expensive, attorneys say. Only about a dozen countries—including Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Libya—have similar HIV travel restrictions.

Because the ban is to be lifted, Washington, D.C. will host the 19th International AIDS conference in 2012, which is expected to be attended by about 30,000 researchers, scientists, policymakers, health care providers, and advocates.

Gay Rights Victory Declared in India

After a protracted legal battle, the Delhi high court scrapped parts of Section 377, a colonial law that criminalized gay sex and indeed anything other than heterosexual vaginal intercourse in India. Therefore consensual sex involving two adults of the same sex can no longer be considered a criminal offence. The Delhi high court's decriminalization of homosexuality is the first step towards equal rights for gay Indians.

www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/jul/02/gay-rights-india-court

Welcoming Churches Weekend

Jan 22-23—St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Newport

Beyond acceptance, some churches openly welcome and encourage full participation by LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) Christians. How did those churches get there? This seminar includes a showing and discussion of "For the Bible Tells Me So," an award-winning documentary focused on the church experiences of five gay Christians and their families, including Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson.

Gay Christians will talk about their experiences with different churches and respond to questions. Clergy of local Welcoming Churches will share their personal experiences with LGBT Christians and the deliberations on this issue within their different denominations.

The weekend begins with refreshments at 4:30 pm, Friday; the session starts at 5:00 pm. The film showing and a discussion follow a light dinner. Saturday begins with a continental breakfast at 8:30 am followed by a discussion of the film and a panel discussion with gay Christians from several denominations. After a light lunch, a panel of local clergy serving churches that welcome gay Christians will talk about their own experiences and how their denominations and local churches work with LGBT-related issues.

The cost for the weekend, including three meals, is \$35, payable to St. Stephen's church. For more information or if cost is a concern, please contact Jeanne St. John at 265-7194. Individuals may make arrangements to help during the weekend in exchange for the fee. St. Stephen's Church is at the corner of 9th & Hurbert, down the hill from the Kite Shop.

OCC PFLAG Calendar:

January 4: U.S. Lifts Ban against HIV-Positive Visitors

January 13, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport [Speaker from Basic Rights Oregon on the Marriage Equality Movement]

January 20, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

January 22-23: Welcoming Churches Weekend Seminar—St. Stephens, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

January 27, 6:00 pm: Potluck/Bible study on "Hope, Homosexuality, and Hospitality"—Atonement Lutheran Church, 2315 N. Coast Highway, Newport

February 10, 7:00 pm: PFLAG Meeting—St. Stephen's, 9th & Hurbert, Newport

February 17, 12:00-1:00 pm: LGBT Task Force Meeting—LCHHS Building, 36 Nye St., Newport

The Coastal AIDS Network* has the following monthly activities:

Second Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Movie Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

Third Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Pizza Night," either Newport, Waldport, or Lincoln City

Fourth Tuesday, 7:00 pm: "Men's Pot Luck and Game Night," St. James Episcopal Church, 2490 NE Hwy 101, Lincoln City

We also try to have pizza in Tillamook or Pacific City. For more information email Dan, coastalaidnetwork@gmail.com or leave a message for him at (541)994-5597.

*CAN activities are open to everyone, regardless of HIV status or sexual orientation. The only event limited to men is the potluck night, but occasionally we bend that rule for special events.

CLASS Women's Potlucks: Call Jeannette at 867-6993.

Join PFLAG!

YES! I support the mission of PFLAG. Enclosed is my membership fee.*

_____ Individual or Household (\$30)
_____ Student/Limited Income (\$20)
_____ Contribution \$ _____

*Includes membership in National PFLAG with affiliates in over 365 worldwide communities.

Make check payable and mail to:

Oregon Central Coast PFLAG
PO Box 2172
Newport, OR 97365

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

PFLAG is a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and has no political or religious affiliations.



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